

REASONS Humbly offered to the Consideration of the
Honourable House of Commons, for the Passing a **BILL**
now depending for the Importation of **SALT-PETRE**,
Occasioned by a Printed Paper, called **The Salt-Petre**
Cafe.

Saltpetre, is a Commodity so necessary, that we can neither Fight nor Trade, or send a Ship to Sea, without it; and in time of War especially, it is our Interest to buy it, if it cannot be procured otherwise, of our Enemies. Therefore, upon the present occasion it is not material, how much those we must buy it of, will get by us; but whether we want it or no.

Nothing can be a more convincing Proof of the present want and scarcity, of Saltpetre in this Kingdom, then the excessive price it bears now, compared with what it was usually sold for formerly, and may be bought for in *Holland* at present. It is now, and for some time since has been sold here for about 8*l.* per Hundred; the price in *Holland* is about one third of that, and it has been formerly much cheaper in *England*, than it is now in *Holland*.

How their Majesties Stores are furnished at present, the Officers of the Ordnance well know; and how dangerous it would be for to suffer the Stores to be exhausted, or to have but a small provision of a Commodity, so necessary for the Safety and Defence of the Nation; and with which there is no prospect of being supplied, (in case of a difference with the *Dutch*), otherwise then by sending for it to the *East-Indies*; in which time the Nation may be ruined for want thereof.

But it is notorious, that the King has during the War bought great quantities of Gunpowder of the *Dutch*, (as the Saltpetre Cafe observes), above 12000 Barrels, which is another proof of the scarcity of Petre in *England*; for it's evidently the Interest of the Nation, for to make Gunpowder of their own Petre, (if they had any), nay to buy Petre of the *Dutch*, rather then Gunpowder, as shall appear afterwards. Therefore supposing this point made out, that there is a want of Saltpetre in *England*; it's fit to consider the consequences in the following Instances.

1. Merchants, Owners of Ships, and Privateers, and Fishing Ships, are at considerably greater charge than ordinary, in making Provision of Powder, necessary for the defence of their Ships. Which, considering how great a share of the Calamity of this War has fallen upon the said Merchants, it's hoped, will weigh with the House.

2. By this means, the Manufacture of Gunpowder in *England* is prejudiced. This the *Dutch* know how to value; and therefore this last year prohibited the exportation of Saltpetre for the use of their Alleys in *Germany*, but suffered them to have as much Gunpowder as they pleased, because a great Duty is imposed upon Gunpowder in *Holland*; and the *Dutch* get more by the Powder, then the Petre which they sell.

3. Gunpowder in *England*, exceeding the price of Five Pound the Barrel, cannot by Law be exported; by which means we cannot supply *Ireland*, and all the *English* Plantations in the *West-Indies*, as formerly; but the *Dutch* find ways of furnishing them at their own rates, to their great Profit.

4. Refiners are forced to send their Silver to *Holland* to be separated, where it can be done much cheaper than in *England*, by reason of the great difference in the Price of Saltpetre.

5. By reason of the scarcity of Saltpetre which is a great ingredient in the composition of Glass. The Glass men are nigh ruined.

6. Our Scarlet and Bow Dyers, cannot Colour without Saltpetre; and because of the great price it bears at present; Merchants find their account in sending Cloth to be dyed in *Holland*; and the *Dutch* have a great advantage of us, in Dying their own Cloths cheap for the *Turkey* Trade, to the prejudice of the Woollen Manufacture of this Nation.

An Imposition of Sixty pound a Tun, (modestly prescribed by the Saltpetre Cafe), may indeed do service to an Ingrosser, who has the greatest part of that small quantity of Saltpetre in *England* now in his own hands; but it is not a remedy likely to obviate the mischiefs above-mentioned, nor to recover so many useful Trades as are almost lost and ruined, by the excessive price of Saltpetre. But if this will not do, the said paper would have us depend upon the Two *East-India* Ships, coming with Saltpetre.

As to this, it is to be observed, The occasions of the Nation are pressing; but it is not certain, when, or whether or no, the said Ships will arrive, and there is the least reason to expect great quantities in those Ships, because Three *East-India* Ships which arrived last year, brought but Sixty Tun or thereabouts.

If other means fail, the Patentees for making Saltpetre will supply our wants.

1. The said Patentees, have been able hitherto to make but a very inconsiderable quantity, two Tun at most, tho in respect of the great price this commodity bears, it was their Interest to make as much as was possible.

2. But it does not appear, whether that little which they pretend to have made, was not bought in order to carry on the ~~the~~ Stock jobbing.

3. And they ought not to be trusted, because they deceived the House last Session, as appears by their Petition at that time presented, against a Bill of the same nature with this now depending; when they promised to make a Quantity sufficient by *September* last, to supply their Majesties and the Trades-men yet have made but two Tun, if they really made that.

It is suspected, private Merchants have bought Saltpetre in *Holland*, &c.

This Author would do well to tell us, what publick Merchants there are in the Nation, for certainly if private Merchants deserve encouragement in any case, it is when they have the Diligence, or Prudence to foresee the wants of the Nation, before our Neighbours are aware of them; and if such have already bought Saltpetre in *Holland*, the *Dutch* have already got all they can get thereby, and by which the *Dutch* are prevented, making the great advantage they might have made, when our whole dependance (through necessity) must have been upon them.

THE
SALT-PETER
CASE.